

**“And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Acts 3:20,21.**

*Fausset* says, “*This far-reaching expression is probably meant to comprehend the rectification of all the disorders of the Fall (of Adam), including the interval from the Ascension of Christ and His Second Coming in glory. And, ‘which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began,’ is a loose expression for a chain of harmonious prophetic testimony from the earliest period (as in Luke 1:70).*” This passage from God’s Holy Word plainly teaches us that this doctrine has been expounded to all mankind – right out of God’s mouth, through the mouth of ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN. As in **Luke chapter 1**; to wit:

***“And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; As he spake BY THE MOUTH OF HIS HOLY PROPHETS, WHICH HAVE BEEN SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.”***  
**(Lk. 1:67-71)**

Think of it beloved. Since the world began there has been a Holy Continuum – (continuum. A continuous whole, no part of which can be distinguished from its neighboring parts. Amen!) – what we may call, a Holy CONTINUUM of humans, male and female (e.g., Miriam, Deborah, Hulda, Jael, and the four virgin daughters of Philip), preaching EXACTLY what we preach, and preaching EXACTLY what they were preaching in **Acts 3** and **Luke 1**, and all parts and portions of Holy Writ. And, Beloved, did you notice Zacharias – while filled with the Holy Ghost – said that God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began, “*That we should be saved from our enemies, and FROM THE HAND OF ALL THAT HATE US?*” **Lk. 1:70,71.** Think of it. Since the world began, there has always been somebody, somewhere in this world, preaching EXACTLY what we preach and what all the others in the Holy Continuum have always preached; to wit:

***“As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.”*** (Isa. 59:21)

*Gill* says, “*Ever since the world was, God has had more or less holy men, set apart and sanctified by him, and on whom he bestowed the spirit of prophecy; and by the mouth of every one of these he has spoken one thing or another concerning his church and people, and the filling up of the number of them, or the gathering them all in; and till this is done, Christ will remain in heaven and reign there; and this sense is further confirmed by the Syriac and Arabic*

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*versions, the former rendering the words, 'until the filling or fulfilling of the times of all things; and the latter, until the times which will confirm the perfection of all the words which God hath spoken; and from the sense of the word used, which some translate PERFECTION or FULFILLING.'*"

Don't you love it, Beloved. The Almighty God pledges by His infinite power to CONFIRM THE PERFECTION OF ALL THE WORDS WHICH HE HATH SPOKEN, including the words which He hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. Every jot and tittle must be fulfilled, and not one jot or tittle of one Scripture can be broken; to wit:

***"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."*** (Mat. 5:18,19)

***"And the scripture cannot be broken."*** (Jn. 10:35)

Now read our glorious text in its equally glorious context, and see that the *"times of restitution of all things,"* (Acts 3:21), are the same as the *"times of refreshing (which) shall come from the presence of the Lord,"* (Acts 3:19); to wit: *"But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the TIMES OF REFRESHING shall come FROM THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD"* – (i.e., the actual physical appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ is here intended, as in, *'Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, WHEN HE SHALL APPEAR, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is (1 Jn. 3:2);' and 'believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Pet. 1:8).'* – *"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you; Whom the heaven must receive until the TIMES OF RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."* Acts 3:18-21.

Accurate commentary on this passage is rare, but to those willing to invest the time and study, handsome rewards and rich blessings will come. Matthew Henry outshines them all in his comments; to wit:

*"(If any would grasp the true meaning) They must believe that times of refreshing will come from the presence of the Lord (v. 19), and that they will be the same as, the times of the restitution of all things (v. 21). There is a future state, another life after this; those times will come from the presence of the Lord, from His glorious appearance at that day, his coming at the end of time. The absence of the Lord occasions many of the securities of sinners and the distrusts of saints; but His presence is hastening on, which will forever silence both. Behold the Judge standeth before the door. The presence of the Lord will introduce, 1) The restitution of all things (v. 21), 2) The new heavens, and*

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*the new earth, which will be the product of the dissolution of all things (Rev. 21:1), 3) The renovation of the whole creation, which is that which it grieves after, as its present burden under the sin of mankind is that which it groans under. Which is to be understood as that end of all things which God hath spoken of by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began; for this is that which Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of (Jude 14), and the temporal judgments which the other prophets foretold were typical of that which the apostle calls THE ETERNAL JUDGMENT. This is more clearly and plainly revealed in the New Testament than it had been before, and all that receive the Gospel have AN EXPECTATION of it. This is that holy EXPECTATION which the apostle Paul enlarges upon magnificently in the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans; to wit: “For the EARNEST EXPECTATION of the whole creation waiteth for the manifestation – complete, universal, identification and glorious revelation of the sons of God – as in ‘Beloved, NOW are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet APPEAR what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, we shall BE LIKE HIM’ (1 Jn. 3:1,2) – “the MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD. For the whole creation was made subject to vanity,” – (i.e., totally corrupt, dislocated, dysfunctional, disordered, defiled and doomed to complete destruction), – “not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope. Because the whole creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” Rom. 8:19. 4) With this will come THE TIMES OF REFRESHING (vs. 19), of consolation to the Lord’s people, like a cool shade to those that have borne the burden and heat of the day. With the bright prospect of this REFRESHING, the weary saints “soldier on” – as they say – borne up under present sufferings and carried on in their present services. The REFRESHING that then “comes from the presence of the Lord,” – (i.e., the REFRESHING comes from the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ is then present, having at that time returned to the earth in power and great glory – His Second Advent or Coming) – “I say, that this glorious REFRESHING will continue eternally IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LORD.”*

And this glorious refreshing is among those things all the Holy Prophets have spoken of since the world began, and “*the times of refreshing*” of Acts 3:19, are the same as “*the times of restitution of all things*” of Acts 3:21, “*which God hath spoken by the mouth of ALL HIS HOLY PROPHETS since the world began.*” Acts 3:21. Note the words “ALL” – and “HIS” – and “HOLY.” These three powerful little words MUST qualify the noun “PROPHETS,” – or spiritual pandemonium will walk upon the scene – as they say. Because, as the apostle Peter says:

***“But there were FALSE PROPHETS also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies... and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” (2 Pet. 2:1,2)***

“**ALL**” – and “**HIS**” – and “**HOLY**” must qualify “**PROPHETS**,” or that dog won’t hunt – as they say. Because, as the Lord Jesus Christ says, “**Beware of FALSE PROPHETS, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree CANNOT bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them** – (i.e., by inspecting and tasting their fruit, you will know which ones, figuratively, to cut down and burn up; and this YOU MUST DO – it is not an option or a mere suggestion – it is a solemn, holy commandment.)” **Mat. 7:15-20.**

At the beginning of this sermon, I quoted Gill to the effect that “**all His holy prophets since the world began**” refers to a “*chain of harmonious prophetic testimony from the earliest period, as in Luke 1:70.*” The word “*harmonious*” speaks to the little word “**ALL**” – no sour notes in God’s prophetic choir – all His prophets sing from the same page – as they say. “**God hath by THE MOUTH of all his holy prophets since the world began.**” Note that they ALL sing with ONE MOUTH, denoting that they all have the exact same message in every nation and in every age, from the beginning to the end of the world.

If any prophet come with any other message, he thereby identifies himself as a FALSE prophet, and not HIS prophet. And, Beloved, this matter of inspecting the fruit of these false prophets – putting them on trial to determine their bona fides – and dealing with them very harshly if they fail the Bible tests for heresy – I say, this matter is very, very dead-serious and of vital and critical importance to the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our dear Savior has told us what to do, and we must do it. In the words of the apostle Paul to the Galatians; to wit:

**“But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, LET HIM BE ACCURSED.” (Gal. 1:8)**

There you are. Number one. Right off the bat. LET HIM BE ACCURSED. “*As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED.*” Gal. 1:9. Is Paul serious about this matter of dealing with false prophets, or not? LET HIM BE ACCURSED, he says – TWICE CURSED! Beloved. Does Paul sound like a man who is trying to disagree without being disagreeable? Is Paul trying to win friends and influence people? – like the famous self-help, best-seller, book says? Hear Paul answer for himself; to wit:

**“For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? FOR IF I YET PLEASED MEN, I SHOULD NOT BE THE SERVANT OF CHRIST.” (Gal. 1:10)**

Amen! and Amen! The apostle John – called the apostle of love – in a letter to “the elect lady and her children...Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love... Bang! ... “*If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For*

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*he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”* 2 Jn. 1:1,3,10-11. And, all such false prophets must be brought to trial, and convicted, and thereby exposed and shown for what they truly are – as at the church of Ephesus; to wit:

***“Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks; I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience, and how THOU CANST NOT BEAR THEM WHICH ARE EVIL: and THOU HAST TRIED THEM WHICH SAY THEY ARE APOSTLES, and are not, and hast found them liars.”*** (Rev. 2:1,2)

Just what form the Ephesian Trials of Heretics took, is not clear; but try them they did; to wit: ***“THOU HAST TRIED THEM.”*** They took evidence, and made findings based on the evidence; to wit: Finding #1. The defendants claimed to be apostles. Finding #2. Defendants are not apostles. Finding #3. The defendants are liars. (***“And hast found them liars.”*** Rev. 2:2.) The defendants could have been tried in person, if they consented; or *in absentia*, much as suggested in Titus chapter one; to wit:

***“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince (i.e., convict) the gainsayer. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things (i.e., false prophets) which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake.”***(Titus 1:9-11)

Beloved, these are among the ***“all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”*** Acts 3:21. These things pertain to church discipline, for these things pertain to false prophets and their exposure. And these things enable us to separate AFORETIME the sheep of Christ (God’s Elect) from the goats of Satan (the non-elect, or the Reprobates). And often our fruit inspection job turns on a point that is exceedingly small – even a ***“SPOT”*** – (i.e., a stain or blemish) – the meaning being a tiny, indelible (incapable of being removed), identifying ***“spot”*** – as the word is used definitively at **chapter 32 of Deuteronomy**; to wit:

***“They have corrupted themselves, their SPOT is not the SPOT of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation.”***(Dt. 32:5)

Now, Beloved, hook **Deut. 32:5** to **Lk. 1:70,71**, and a powerful story emerges for those with eyes to see (i.e., God’s Elect); to wit: Mankind is composed of but two classes of people, the children of God, and all the rest who are corrupt, perverted, and crooked; and one immediately differentiating thing whereby the one class can be distinguished from the other class are tiny SPOTS. God Himself – Who is the Great Discriminator – placed the SPOTS; ***“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to BELIEVE on him, but also to SUFFER for his sake.”*** Phil. 1:29. Further, the New Testament equivalent of **Deut. 32:5** is found at **Phil. 2:15**; to wit:

***“Do all things without murmurings and disputings; That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a CROOKED and PERVERSE nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain.” (Phil. 2:14-16)***

(Notice, in Deut. 32:5, and now in Phil. 2:15, the sons of God are depicted as living and suffering in the midst of CROOKS and PERVERTS, among whom they shine as lights in the world.) These also are among the *“things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”* Acts 3:21.

***“Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.” (Lk. 1:67-71)***

What, then, is the message that the Lord God *“spake by the mouth of his holy prophets since the world began?”* Is it not *“That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us?”* Lk. 1:71. Is this not the dominate theme of the Book of the 150 Psalms? Take this sampling; to wit:

***“Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about. Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God.”*** Psa. 3:1,6,7.

***“Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.”*** Psa. 27:3.

***“Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.”*** Psa. 56:2.

***“They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, being mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty.”*** Psa. 69:4.

***“Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me: thou shalt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies, and thy right hand shall save me.”*** Psa. 138:7.

There you have it: A little band of suffering saints, traveling through a hostile wilderness, surrounded by deadly persecutors who are corrupt and crooked perverts, and yet who prevail at last.

***“They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse, crooked generation.”*** (Dt. 32:5)

Amen.